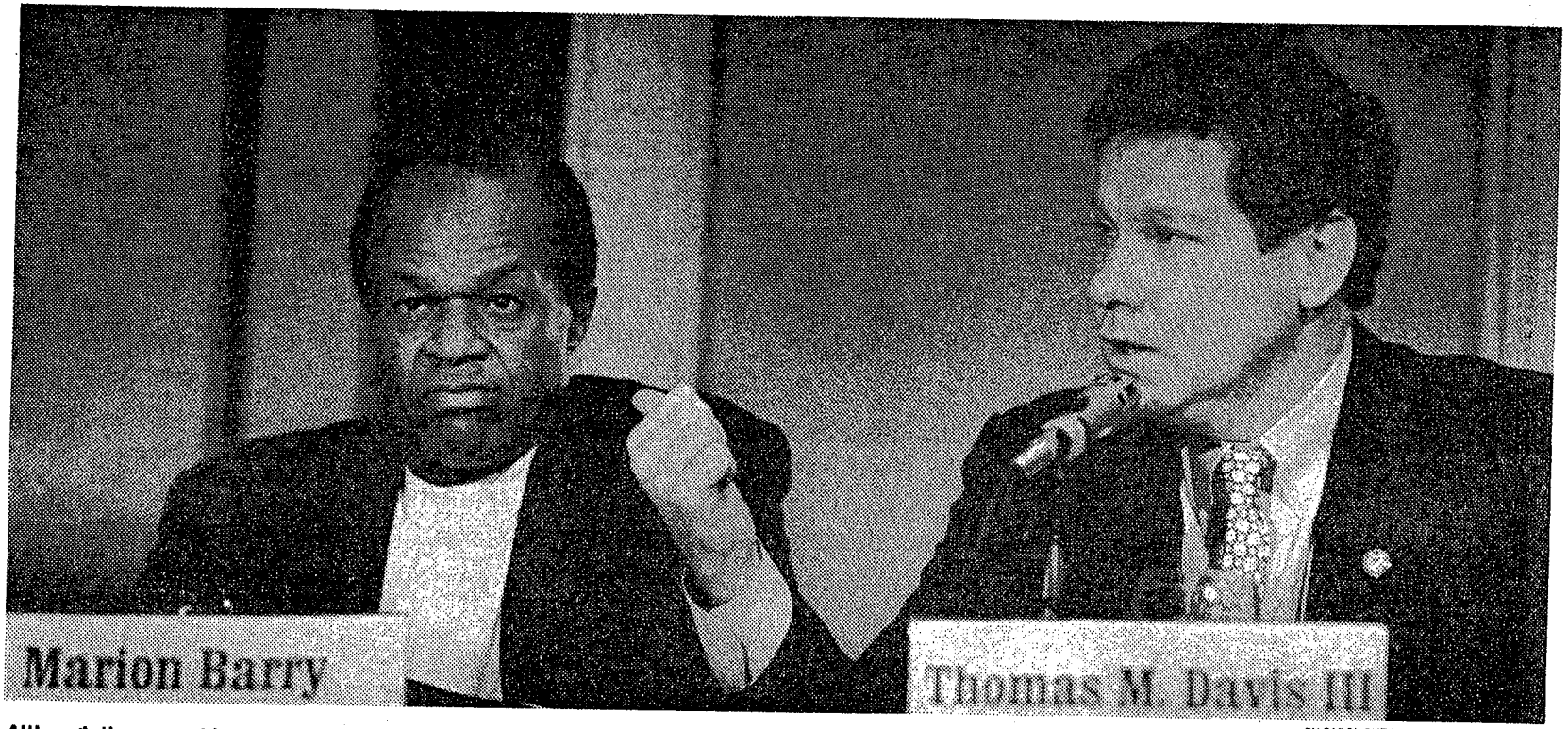

BY CAROL GUZY—THE WASHINGTON POST

Although they were highly complimentary of each other, Barry and Davis painted very different pictures of the District's financial problems and prospects.

Contrary to Gingrich, D.C. Schools Not Most Expensive

3/11/95

By Kenneth J. Cooper
Washington Post Staff Writer

House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.) has been calling D.C. schools "the most expensive" in the country, but they are not, according to information from the Census Bureau and the Education Department.

The District's per pupil expenditures of $7,435 ranked it 11th among the nation's 220 largest school systems in the 1991-1992 academic year, the most recent for which data were collected. The school system with the highest cost was Newark's, with a per pupil expenditure of $9,760.

In recent days, Gingrich has said the District has a per pupil cost of $9,600, a figure he said should be viewed against such District school problems as poor test scores, school buildings in disrepair and student violence.

Yesterday, Gingrich repeated his criticism of D.C. schools but modified his estimates of the per pupil costs.

"This system, I am told, is the most expensive school system in the country. The question is whether it's $9,600, which is what one staff person told me, or $7,300," Gingrich said during remarks to African American Republicans in the District for a day of candidate training.

Tony Blankley, Gingrich's press secretary, said the Republican speaker had meant to indicate that the District school system is one of the most expensive. Blankley said he was unsure of the source of the $9,600 figure.

The federal Survey of Local Government Finances, tabulated in May 1994, showed that 10 other school systems had higher per pupil expenditures.

Most of the high-cost districts are in the Northeast.

After Newark, they ranked, in order: Yonkers, N.Y. ($9,172), Trenton, N.J. ($8,844), Kansas City, Mo. ($8,656), Rochester, N.Y. ($8,614), Jersey City, ($8,542), Hartford, Conn. ($8,300), Paterson, N.J. ($8,225) and Orleans Parish, La. ($7,652).